

ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES

NEWS RELEASE



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2012 Yukon River Fall Salmon Fishery News Release # 27

Fall Update # 5, Yukon Area Salmon Fishery

Districts Affected: Yukon Area

Fall Season Assessment

The estimated cumulative fall chum salmon total run size through August 19, based on run reconstruction, is 720,000 fish. This is above the historical median of 475,000 fish for that date. The drift test fishery projects at Emmonak and Mountain Village corroborate the timing and relative passage strength estimated by the Pilot Station sonar project. The projected 2012 fall chum salmon run size, based on early to median run timing, is a range between 800,000 and 1 million fish.

The first pulse of fall chum salmon entered the lower Yukon River on July 17 and was estimated to be 122,000 fish in size. Three additional pulses entered the lower Yukon River on July 25, July 31 and August 4 were estimated to be 142,000, 35,500, and 43,000 fish in size, respectively. A fifth pulse entered the river on August 16 and is currently passing Pilot Station and is estimated to be greater than 150,000 fish in size and the largest pulse this season.

Coho salmon began entering the Yukon River in August with the largest pulse occurring on August 17 in the lower Yukon test fishery. The cumulative passage by the Pilot Station sonar project through August 19, based on run reconstruction, is approximately 45,000 fish, which is below the historical median of 75,000 fish for that date.

Lower Yukon River Cooperative Drift Test Fishing – YDFDA, ADF&G

The cumulative CPUE for fall chum salmon through August 19 was 1,778.4, which is above the historical median of 1,027.6 for that date. The cumulative CPUE through August 19 for coho salmon was 199.4, which is below the historical median of 202.7 for that date.

Mountain Village Drift Test Fishing - Asacarsarmiut Traditional Council and BSFA

The cumulative CPUE for fall chum salmon through August 19 was 1,043.6 which is below the historical median of 1,583.0 for that date. The cumulative CPUE for coho salmon through August 19 was 314.9, which is below the historical median of 430.0 for that date.

Pilot Station Sonar Project - ADF&G

The cumulative fall chum salmon passage through August 19 is approximately 509,000 fish, which is above the median passage of 426,800 fish for that date. The cumulative coho salmon passage through August 19 is approximately 32,000 fish, which is below the median passage of 59,500 fish for that date.

Rapids Test Fish Wheel Project - Zuray

The cumulative fall chum salmon CPUE through August 19 is approximately 7,200 fish, which is slightly above the historical median of 6,300 fish for that date. The cumulative CPUE based on the adjusted water level is slightly above the historical median for that date.

Chandalar Sonar Project - USFWS

The cumulative fall chum salmon passage through August 19 is approximately 10,000 fish, which is above the average passage of 9,000 fish for that date.

Sheenjek Sonar Project - ADF&G

The cumulative fall chum salmon passage through August 19 is approximately 1,400 fish, which is below the average passage of 2,700 fish for that date.

Tanana Test Fish Wheel Project - Moore

The cumulative fall chum salmon passage through August 18 is 2,800 fish, which is above the average of 184 fish for that date. The cumulative coho salmon passage through August 18 is 19 fish, which is above the average of 2 fish for that date.

Eagle Sonar Project - ADF&G

The cumulative Chinook salmon passage at Eagle sonar is estimated to be approximately 34,800 through August 19, which is below the average of 55,830 for this date. The preliminary projection at Eagle sonar for Chinook salmon passage is approximately 35,000 to 36,000. A passage of this size is below the Interim Management Escapement Goal of 42,500 to 55,000 adopted by the joint US-Canada Yukon River Panel. Preseason, the objective was to achieve a minimum of 50,000 Chinook salmon across the border into Canada to satisfy both adequate escapement and harvest sharing needs in Canada.

Salcha River Tower - BSFA

The cumulative count for Chinook salmon through August 19 is approximately 7,000. The escapement goal of 3,300 – 6,500 for Chinook in the Salcha River has been achieved. The cumulative count for summer chum salmon is approximately 43,800 fish which is above the median for this date. Project operations have been extended in an effort to more thoroughly monitor summer chum salmon escapement.

Stock Identification

Fall chum salmon genetic samples processed from August 3 through August 10 (pulse 3) passage past Pilot Station sonar indicate that stocks represent approximately 16%, 31%, and 38% for Tanana, Border/US (Chandalar/Sheenjek), and Mainstem Canada respectively. Summer chum salmon made up approximately 11% of the fish sampled during that time period. These proportions are near average based on the 2004-2011 dataset.

Age Composition

The fall chum salmon age composition from the 6" LYTF drift nets through August 18 was 0.7% age-3, 76.9% age-4, 19.5% age-5, and 3.0% age-6 fish. The average age-4 fish is 65.0% for this date and average age-5 fish 33.4%. The sample size was 917 fish for ages and 992 for gender. Females contributed 53.9% to the samples, which is below the average of 56.5%.

The combined fall chum salmon age composition from commercial harvest periods in District 1 (through August 5) was 76.7% age-4, 20.5% age-5, and 2.7% age-6 fish. The sample size was 556 fish for ages and 560 for gender. The proportion of females in the commercial catch samples was 60.1%.

Fall Season Management

In accordance with the Yukon River Drainage Fall Chum Salmon Management Plan, a total run ranging from 800,000 to 1.0 million fish is adequate for escapement needs, full subsistence opportunity, and has a surplus available for other uses. Subsistence fishing is now on the full regulatory schedules all portions of the river.

A substantial fifth pulse has entered the Yukon River and commercial fishing has resumed in the lower Yukon River. Managers will consider additional opportunities dependent upon inseason assessment. Fishermen should be aware that commercial periods may be announced with short notice.

Fall Commercial Salmon Fishing

Through August 20, ten fall commercial fishing periods have been announced in District Y-1, seven periods in District Y-2, two periods in Subdistrict 4-A, and one period in Subdistricts 5-B and 5-C. Additional commercial fishing periods will be dependent upon inseason run strength assessment and market interest.

Preliminary harvest information for District Y-1:

Period #9: District Y-1, 9 hours (10:00 a.m. until 7:00 p.m. August 18).

16,851 fall chum/113,665 lbs. (\$0.75/lb.), 13,234 coho/82,170 lbs. (\$1.00/lb.), Incidental harvest (not sold): 0 Chinook salmon.

Period #10: District Y-1 Set Net Only Area, 12 hours (10:00 a.m. until 10:00 p.m. August 20), remainder of District Y-1, 9 hours (1:00 p.m. until 10:00 p.m. August 20).

No harvest information available.

The cumulative harvest for Y-1 through August 19 is 117,168 fall chum and 19,589 coho salmon, and the incidental harvest (not sold) of Chinook salmon is 59 fish.

Preliminary harvest information for District Y-2:

Period #7: District Y-2, 9 hours (12:00 noon until 9:00 p.m. August 19).

38,480 fall chum/270,273 lbs. (\$0.75/lb.), 9,673 coho/58,489 lbs. (\$1.00/lb.), Incidental harvest (not sold): 0 Chinook salmon.

The cumulative harvest for Y-2 through August 20 is 110,589 fall chum and 12,813 coho salmon, and the incidental harvest (not sold) of Chinook salmon is 34 fish.

Preliminary harvest information for Subdistrict 4-A:

Period #2: Subdistrict 4-A, 120 hours (6:00 p.m. August 14 until 6:00 p.m. August 19).

0 fall chum, 0 coho, Incidental harvest (not sold): 0 Chinook salmon.

Preliminary harvest information for Subdistricts 5-B and 5-C:

Period #1: Subdistricts 5-B and 5-C, 120 hours (6:00 p.m. August 14 until 6:00 p.m. August 19).

1,484 fall chum, 0 coho, Incidental harvest (not sold): 0 Chinook salmon.

Summer Commercial Salmon Fishing

Seven commercial fishing periods occurred in District 6 during the summer season. The preliminary cumulative commercial harvest in District 6 through August 15 is approximately 3,582 summer chum salmon. Effective August 15, District 6 switched to fall season management.

Subsistence Salmon Fishing

Coastal District: Subsistence salmon fishing is open 7 days per week, 24 hours a day and fishermen may use gillnets with a mesh size of 7.5 inches or smaller.

Districts 1, 2, 3: Subsistence salmon fishing is open 7 days per week, 24 hours a day except for 12 hours before, during, and 12 hours after each commercial fishing period. Fishermen may use gillnets with a mesh size of 7.5 inches or smaller during open subsistence salmon fishing periods.

The Innoko River: Subsistence salmon fishing is open 7 days per week, 24 hours a day and fishermen may use gillnets with a mesh size of 7.5 inches or smaller.

Subdistrict 4-A (from $\frac{3}{4}$ miles downstream of Old Paradise Village upstream to Cone Point): This area includes the mainstem Yukon River communities of Anvik, Grayling, Kaltag, Nulato, and Koyukuk. Subsistence salmon fishing in Subdistrict 4-A is currently open 5 days per week from 6:00 p.m. Tuesdays to 6:00 p.m. Sundays. Use of drift gillnets to harvest fall chum salmon is allowed in that portion of Subdistrict 4-A from Stink Creek upstream to Cone Point during open subsistence fishing periods.

Subdistricts 4-B and 4-C (from Cone Point to Illinois Creek): This area includes the mainstem Yukon River communities of Galena and Ruby. Subsistence salmon fishing is open 5 days per week from 6:00 p.m. Sundays to 6:00 p.m. Fridays.

In District 4, fishermen may use gillnets with a mesh size of 7.5 inches or smaller during open subsistence salmon fishing periods.

Koyukuk River: Subsistence salmon fishing in the Koyukuk River is open 7 days per week, 24 hours a day and fishermen may use gillnets with a mesh size of 7.5 inches or smaller.

Subdistricts 5-A, 5-B, and 5-C: Subsistence salmon fishing is open 5 days per week from 6:00 p.m. Tuesdays until 6:00 p.m. Sundays.

Subdistrict 5-D: Subsistence salmon fishing is open 7 days per week, 24 hours a day and fishermen may use gillnets with a mesh size of 7.5 inches or smaller.

Subdistricts 6-A and 6-B (from the mouth of the Tanana River upstream to the downstream mouth of Wood River): This area includes the communities of Manley, Minto, and Nenana. Subsistence salmon fishing is open for two 42-hour periods per week from 6:00 p.m. Fridays until 12:00 noon Sundays and from 6:00 p.m. Mondays until 12:00 noon Wednesdays. In the Old Minto Area, subsistence fishing for salmon is open for one 5 day fishing period per week from 6:00 p.m. Fridays until 6:00 p.m. Wednesdays.

Subdistricts 6-C (from the mouth of the Wood River upstream to the downstream mouth of the Salcha River): This area includes the communities of Fairbanks, North Pole, and Salcha. Personal use salmon fishing is open for two 42-hour periods per week from 6:00 p.m. Fridays until 12:00 noon Sundays and from 6:00 p.m. Mondays until 12:00 noon Wednesdays.

During subsistence salmon fishing closures, fish wheels may not be operated and gillnets with a mesh size greater than four inches and a length greater than 60 feet must be removed from the water.

Recorded fishery announcements and updates are available 24 hours a day at (907) 949-1731 or 1-866-479-7387. If you have any questions regarding this report, please call the Emmonak ADF&G office at (907) 949-1320 or the Fairbanks ADF&G office at (907) 459-7274. The Emmonak ADF&G office will stand by on VHF channel 7A.

This has been an announcement by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game in cooperation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

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